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SUBJECT: GUEBUZA MAKES FEW CHANGES TO CABINET

Classified By: Charge d'Affaires Todd Chapman for reasons 1.4 (b+d)

¶1. (SBU) SUMMARY: On January 16 President Guebuza announced the members of his Cabinet. There were few changes. With the exception of shifting Aires Aly, Minister of Education and Culture during Guebuza's first term, to Prime Minister, all other key ministers retained their posts. With Guebuza's FRELIMO party receiving high percentages of votes in the tainted presidential, legislative and provincial elections held October 28, there was little incentive to make revisions. The President took the opportunity to reward loyalty, despite public concerns of international donors about democracy and governance. END SUMMARY.

New Prime Minister: Personally Loyal to Guebuza

¶2. (SBU) Aires Aly, from Mozambique's largest and least populous province, Niassa, in the country's northwestern corner, is a Muslim and member of a relatively small tribe, the Nyanja. He was named by President Guebuza to replace Luisa Diogo, who was considered to be a strong supporter of former president Chissano. Diogo will no longer be part of the executive, although she will serve as an MP in the National Assembly (AR). Though Aly did not especially distinguish himself in his previous position as Minister of Education and Culture, he does sit on FRELIMO's key Political Commission. While many observers note that his promotion brings geographical, religious, and tribal balance to the Cabinet, it is more importantly seen as an acknowledgment of Aly's cleaving to the party line and his personal loyalty to President Guebuza. Observers also agree that while Aly could be a potential candidate for the Presidency, he would never attempt to compete with Guebuza should the constitution be revised to allow Guebuza to run for a third term in 2014.

¶3. (SBU) Prior to his appointment as Minister of Education and Culture in 2005, Aly was governor of Niassa (1995 to 2000) and of the southern province of Inhambane (2000 to 2004). He also served as the Provincial Director of Education in Nampula, head of the office of the Minister of Education, and National Director of School Social Welfare Programs. Aly has two children studying at the university level in Oklahoma and has expressed support of educational exchange programs between the United States and Mozambique.

But Few Other New Faces

¶4. (C) All other key ministers retained their positions. Remaining in place are the Ministers of Foreign Affairs, Defense, Planning and Development, Interior, Health, Finance, Commerce, Agriculture, Justice, Science and Technology, Labor, Mineral Resources, Energy, Transport, Public Service, and the Ministry of the Presidency. The only changes were at

minor ministries such as Fisheries, Veterans, Affairs, Women's Affairs and Social Welfare, and Public Works and Housing. Aly's replacement at the Education Ministry, Zeferino Martins, served in the Chissano administration as Vice Minister of Education and has particular expertise in vocational and technical training. He is generally seen as an experienced, capable professional. A presidential advisor told the Charge that the former Minister of Public Works, Felicio Zacarias, was dismissed because of demonstrated corruption in his ministry.

Comment: Consolidation, Not Change

¶5. (C) Despite widespread concerns by international donors about democracy and governance issues, and increasing evidence of and public criticism of high-level corruption, President Guebuza failed to make substantial changes in his cabinet. The USG already has positive working relations with the new PM and with the existing FM and Minister of the Presidency which will assist with continuity in our political discussions. It is unfortunate, however, that many of the poorly performing economic Ministers, such as Industry and Commerce, Planning and Development, Labor, and Agriculture, were not replaced, which could hamper progress in pressing forward with our economic and developmental policy agenda.

CHAPMAN